

# **Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee**

## **Summary Minutes**

**March 15, 2005**

**In Attendance: Diane Cook, Aleatha Dickerson, Vicki Ferrara, Steve Florio, Elaina Goldstein, Brenda Holder, Steve Kitchin, Michelle Malloy, Rep. Eileen Naughton, Kathleen Partington, Arthur Plitt, Christine Rancourt, Lauren Slocum**

**Guest: Beth Pinkham**

**Staff: Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Valerie Shore, Nancy Wooten**

- **The minutes from the 2/22/05 meeting were approved.**
- **The Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee Mission Statement was read and reviewed by the Committee.**
- **The Steering Committee welcomed Steering Committee member Representative Eileen Naughton.**

### **Youth in Transition Workgroup**

- **The Workgroup met once since the last SC meeting.**
- **Two Train the Trainer module training sessions have been held. A wide range of agencies attended the sessions (12 agencies represented, 23 people in attendance).**

- **The PowerPoint presentation will be part of the Speakers Bureau, representing its first component. The Speakers Bureau will be launched within the next few months.**
- **The Training Manual will appear on the website.**

### **Housing Workgroup**

- **The Housing Workgroup has not met since the last Steering Committee meeting but is scheduled to meet March 22nd. The Workgroup is currently setting up the Housing focus groups.**

### **Diversity Workgroup**

- **The first Workgroup meeting is scheduled for March 17th. Eleven individuals representing different minority and ethnic populations and agencies / organizations have confirmed they will join the workgroup.**

### **Data Workgroup**

- **The original goal for this workgroup was – once the Medicaid Buy-In is up and running – to make sure that all necessary data elements are in place. Between now and when the Buy-In is operational, an ad hoc Informational and Referral Resource Directory subcommittee will be formed within the Data Workgroup to make certain that complete information relative to people with disabilities appears on the Resource Directory website in an organized fashion.**
- **On a time-limited basis, this subcommittee will touch base with the multiple agencies and organizations represented on the RTI**

**workgroups so that the optimum number of agencies, organizations and employers can participate in the process. Steering Committee members were asked to identify any relevant agencies / people who might be useful in this process and email to Elaina before the April or May Meeting. The goal is have a first meeting in April or May.**

- The Parent Support Network was suggested as a resource.**

### **Real Choices Conference: Overview**

- This conference is a deliverable of the DHS Real Choices Grant (to host a conference on community-based services across the long-term care continuum for all populations).**
- The conference will take place on September 26th and 27th with two plenary sessions; the first will feature a motivational speaker and the second session will have as speakers grassroots advocacy leaders from communities in other states. One part will have speakers and break out sessions (Rhodes to Independence will participate) – this is the “conference” component. As there is limited space, people will have to sign up for this part. The second part is more open to the public and includes an Expo where materials and resources may be gathered (open for both days), an Assistive Technology Room that will have examples for people to see. There will be an “Internet Café” where the public can see web resources; there will be people available to provide support as needed.**
- There will be a reception which will provide the opportunity to network.**
- Details are being planned.**

## **Resource Directory Update**

- **The Resource Directory is a key Rhodes to Independence Infrastructure Grant deliverable and resources / staff time are being devoted to its development.**
- **Consumers should be able to get clear and concise information.**
- **A huge database will be developed; users will be able to search by keyword, etc.**
- **A benefits screener will be developed so that people can see if they might be eligible after they plug in required information.**
- **The feedback from the Rhodes to Independence staff, Steering Committee and other stakeholders will be critical to determine what is missing from the database.**
- **The question was asked “who owns the Resource Directory?” The State of Rhode Island owns the site.**
- **The question was asked “how can quality of information be assured and uniformity of certain criteria – for example, definition of the word ‘accessible’?” A standard for information will be set regarding whether a provider may be listed on the website. Before a provider becomes part of the database, there must be “upfront assurances” regarding accessibility.**

## **Medicaid Buy-In Update**

- **CMS Central and Regional offices had been in conflict regarding the**

**legality of the technical language of the State Plan Amendment.**

- **Another legislation language issue regards employers' concerns about employer-based coverage. An unintended consequence of the language; it was intended as a "pay or play" ... as with the Rlte Share language where the vision is that an employer could choose to bring an employee into their own insurance program or pay DHS to cover. The employers who looked at the language were concerned that it would be a key disincentive to hiring a people with a disability. It appears that the language as it stands will put an undue burden on an employer - it has been calculated that in employers' experience, hiring one employee with a disability will increase employers' premium costs. Any perceived fear by an employer will cause him/her to err on the side of caution regarding hiring an individual with disabilities. The language will need to be reviewed to address these concerns.**

### **Other Business / Next Steps**

- **The next Rhodes to Independence meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 19th, 2:30 – 4:00 pm, at the Department of Labor and Training, Building #73, 1st Floor Conference Room.**